

SB 732 (Toxic Mold Protection Act of 2001)
Implementation Update
February 2006

Many people have contacted the California Department of Health Services (DHS) regarding the implementation status of the Toxic Mold Protection Act of 2001 (SB 732). This statute, enacted January 1, 2002, charged DHS to determine the feasibility of adopting permissible exposure limits for indoor molds, and, assisted by a task force of volunteer stakeholders, to undertake a series of complex tasks to develop new standards or guidelines that:

- assess the health threat posed by the presence of indoor molds,
- determine valid methods for fungal sampling and identification,
- provide practical guidance for mold removal and abatement of water intrusion,
- disclose the presence of mold growth in real property at rental or sale, and
- assess the need for standards for mold assessment and remediation professionals.

However, the implementation of this statute depends on the availability of funding.

We are pleased to announce that the DHS report titled ***Implementation of the Toxic Mold Protection Act of 2001*** has been released. The report addresses the first of the SB 732-mandated tasks listed above, specifically, that DHS scientific staff consider whether it is feasible to adopt permissible exposure limits (PELs) for indoor mold. This document includes a discussion of how permissible exposure limits are defined and derived. The report is available on-line at http://www.cal-iaq.org/MOLD/SB732_LegReport_Final.pdf.

After considerable research into this issue, DHS scientists concluded that although recent studies have strengthened the evidence between living or working in a damp environment and increased risk for respiratory symptoms, the role of mold growth in these complex environments is still unclear. Damp buildings also encourage the growth of bacteria, dust mites and cockroaches, as well as degradation of wet building materials that can also release irritant chemicals indoors. Some or all of these chemicals or biological organisms may contribute to occupant illness. For these and other reasons detailed in the report, science-based PELs for indoor molds cannot be established at this time. Please see the full text of the report for further information.

Fund for voluntary contributions

The Public Health Protection from Indoor Mold Hazards Fund, was established in 2002 to accept contributions to help support DHS indoor mold-related activities, including, but not limited to, those mandated by SB 732. Donations can be made by sending a check payable to the California Department of Health Services (with notation for "Mold Fund") to:

Michele Sabel
Environmental Health Investigations Branch
Department of Health Services
850 Marina Bay Parkway, Building P, 3rd Floor
Richmond, CA 94804

Currently, the fund has not received any significant contributions. Thus DHS is still searching for the necessary funding (\$518,000 to complete Phase I and \$646,000 to complete Phase II) to

initiate and complete the tasks set forth in the proposed work plan below. DHS will proceed with implementation when funding is in place to address the bill requirements.

Task Force information

Department of Health Services staff are continuing to collect contact information for those who are interested in serving on the task force. As of February 15, 2006, there are 242 individuals who have volunteered for the task force. If funding becomes available to convene this group, we will contact those on our volunteer list regarding the process to choose those who will actually serve on the task force.

Anyone wishing to volunteer to serve may send his or her contact information (name, mailing address, email address, phone number, fax number) to dpaniagu@dhs.ca.gov. Please indicate any professional affiliation or whether you are a member of a group whose participation on the task force is required by SB 732 (such as homeowners, residential tenants, or others – see SB 732 Section 27101.7 for the complete list).

SB 732 also requires DHS to develop public education materials and resources with information about mold health effects, cleanup/removal methods and prevention techniques. DHS staff routinely review, update and supplement mold documents and links on this website (www.cal-iaq.org/) to supply readers with reliable information on these topics.